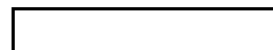


OXCART




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20 November 1964

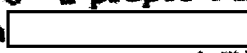
MEMORANDUM FOR: Office of the DD/S&T

Attention: 

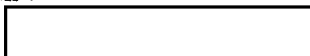
SUBJECT:

Letter from D/NRO to Clarence L. Johnson
regarding the J-58 Engine

1. The attached letter  dated 19 November 1964, from the D/NRO to Kelly Johnson was received in OSA late in the afternoon of the 19th. I immediately got in touch with Col. Ledford at Lockheed in Burbank, California to apprise him of its contents. Col. Ledford was aware of the existence of the letter since Leo Geary apparently carried it by hand to Kelly, and since he (Geary) and Ledford were on the same aircraft I assume this is how Jack became aware of the communication; however, he told me that Geary demurred in showing it to him and did not acknowledge any awareness of its content to Jack.

2. I think the only things which may be a proper subject for questioning are the two requirements which  has laid on Kelly directly; the first is a plan for the reduction of FOD to a level less than one incident per month, even at levels of flight activity up to 200 hours a month, and secondly a plan, presumably in writing, for a solution of the problem encountered in the air induction and ejector areas. In this second context you will note the suggestion that a major effort to solve the latter two problems might result in a reduction of activity in OXCART leading toward operational readiness.

Attachment:

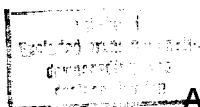


JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

Distribution:

- 1 - DD/S&T w/a
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- 4 - AD/OSA w/a
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- 6 - DAD
- 7 - ~~George~~
- 8 - RB/OSA

OXCART



TOP SECRET

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

November 19, 1964

Dear Kelly,

At my request, Colonel Ledford and Colonel Geary are examining current and projected engine requirements with special emphasis on the factors that control the availability of the J-58 engines to support both the OXCART and SR-71 programs. One fact that stands out sharply is that Foreign Object Damage is a significant cause of engine outage. The records I have seen show a current rate of FOD incidence, per engine start, as high as that experienced during the worst period during 1963. It is clear that the present or even a sharply curtailed flight program cannot continue unless immediate corrective action is successful in reducing the FOD rate. Past experience shows that the rate can be held to something approaching one episode a month. Even at this rate, the direct cost of FOD to the program and its impact on the attainment of program objectives can be substantial.

I am sure you will agree that every effort must be made to establish controls and procedures to hold the incidence of FOD to an absolute minimum. As soon as possible, I would like you to present me with a plan that will assure us that the rate of FOD will be less than one episode per month, even at levels of flight activity up to 200 hours per month.

You will recall that last spring we discussed your then current program of tests and modifications to the air induction system. I believe that your judgment at the time was that the program was adequate to assure an early solution to the problems being encountered.

As I interpret the recent flight records, it seems to me that we have not yet fully solved these problems. I would like you to consider again, whether a broader approach may not be called for and to give me your plans for reaching solution.

OXCART

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DOD DIR. 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

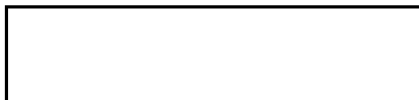
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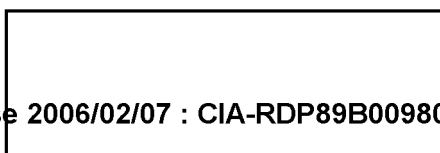
If a major continuing attack on the air induction or ejector problems is likely, it will be good economy to reduce the pace of activity on OXCART devoted to preparing for operational readiness. If significant changes are likely in the design of the nacelle, we must also consider adjustments in the SR-71 program to avoid the risk of expensive modifications. I will need a discussion of the impact of your plan as it bears on questions such as these.

If possible, I would like to hear from you early next week.

Sincerely,



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ILLEGIB

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